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Leadership at the Short End of the Bayonet: The Direction of Leader Training at the U. S. Army Ranger School

A Monograph
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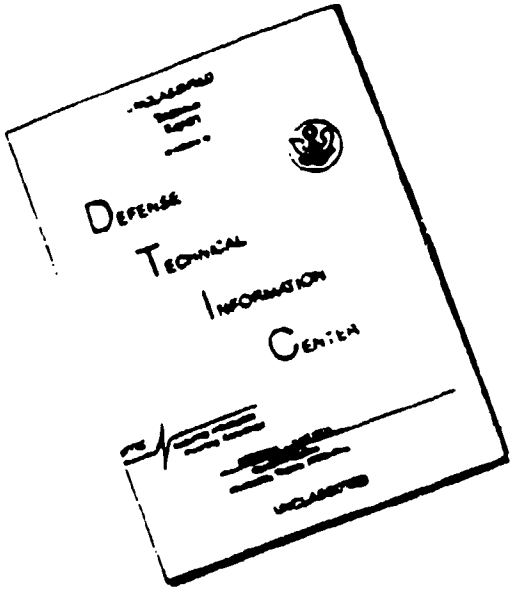

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ABSTRACT

LEADERSHIP AT THE SHORT END OF THE BAYONET: THE DIRECTION OF LEADER TRAINING AT THE U. S. ARMY RANGER SCHOOL, by Major Eric D. Hutchings, USA, 53 pages.

This monograph examines whether the current U. S. Army Ranger School POI develops the necessary small unit leadership skills required to support the needs of the Light Infantry Divisions. The austere construct of the Light Infantry Division permits few vehicles and limited heavy weapons, thus the dynamic of leadership plays an enhanced role in the generation of combat power for that organization. A 1984 White Paper from the Army Chief of Staff provided guidance for the formation of Light Infantry Divisions and specifically directed Ranger training for many of the Division NCO and officer leader billets. Through this training the leadership capabilities and hence the combat power of the Light Infantry Division were to be enhanced.

This paper concludes that the existing Ranger curriculum only partially cultivates students in a number of leadership competencies falling short of what is required to develop light leaders. However, identified shortfalls within the curriculum can be rectified within the existing framework of the Ranger School.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1983 the U.S. Army introduced light infantry divisions into the force structure. These light infantry divisions were designed to be offensively oriented, highly responsive, and particularly capable of fighting in close terrain. This "light" structure allowed for the rapid movement and maneuver of these divisions, yet limited the amount of organic firepower and protection available to the force. Because of constraints in both firepower and protection, the generation of combat power within light infantry divisions focused greatly on the dynamic of leadership.[1]

General John A. Wickham Jr., the Chief of Staff of the Army, writing in a 1984 White Paper on light infantry divisions, addressed this dynamic of leadership in terms of "soldier power". He defined soldier power as:

> The synergistic combination of concerned, competent leaders and well trained soldiers which will make light infantry forces uniquely effective.[2]

To develop this "soldier power" light divisions were authorized the newest equipment and protected from training distractors. Training within these divisions would be situational and stressful to instill the necessary self-confidence, discipline, and initiative required to execute light infantry tactics. Instrumental in building this "soldier power" would be the manning of the light infantry divisions with special leadership.

Only quality officers and NCOs would be selected for these light units. The Army turned to its Ranger School to develop these quality leaders. In the

words of General Wickham, leaders for these light divisions would:

> Compete to get in and compete to stay in. Many leadership positions will require ranger training.[3]

General Wickham's 1984 ranger training guidance greatly affected the construct of the light infantry divisions. The table of organization and equipment (TOE) developed for a full strength light infantry division authorized 283 enlisted ranger billets. This TOE designated ranger enlisted billets for infantry and cavalry NCOs of the sergeant first class and staff sergeant rank.[4] In a fully manned light infantry division, this translated to ranger qualification for all the infantry platoon sergeants and two thirds of infantry squad leaders.

Almost all the light division's infantry officer positions required ranger qualification. At the infantry company level, coding of ranger billets included three out of four platoon leader positions as well as the company executive officer and company commander positions. Ranger training was encouraged for many other non-infantry officer branches within the light division such as the military intelligence, artillery, and signal branches.

Additional requirements brought by the formation of these light divisions required the expansion of the Ranger School. To continue support of this training requirement, the Ranger School provided approximately fifteen slots to each light infantry division in the ten ranger classes run annually.[5]

General William E. DePuy, a former Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander, writing in 1985 on the subject of small unit leaders in light infantry divisions stated:

> The fighting takes place at team, squad and platoon level, most of it beyond the view and some of it beyond the knowledge of battalion and even company commanders. In no other form of combat does so much depend upon small unit leaders and aggressive and innovative responses to transient opportunities within the broadest interpretation of the mission at hand.[6]

General DePuy clearly indicated that light divisions need a very dynamic small unit leader to function effectively.

This monograph will determine if the U.S. Army Ranger school develops the necessary small unit leadership skills to support the needs of the light infantry divisions. The existing Ranger School program of instruction will be analyzed to see if its curriculum is compatible with the development of light infantry leaders.

To examine this question, first it will be useful to explore the roots of the U.S. Army's current light infantry doctrine, its small unit leader focus, and the theoretical base of the doctrine. Second, it will be appropriate to analyze closely the battlefield experience of a prominent small unit leader who employed what we classify as light infantry tactics. The criteria to examine this experience will be the leadership competencies from FM 22-100. Third, it will be necessary to take this historical analysis and apply the analysis against the contemporary AirLand battlefield environment. The intent will be to assess the longevity and pertinence of these leader skills to modern combat, as well as to identify any additional leader skills that modern combat may require.

Finally implications will be drawn from these conclusions regarding the tasks currently trained in Ranger School. To proceed with this examination let us first look at the roots of our light infantry doctrine and its theoretical base.

THE EMPOWERING OF SUBORDINATE LEADERS

Why do we currently need a light infantry doctrine whose implementation requires such an emphasis on innovative and aggressive small unit leaders? To answer this question we must first look at the increasing lethality of the battlefield throughout history and the conditions wrought by that lethality.

Ancient military leaders understood that success on the battlefield was tied to the social nature of man. Combatants endured the terror of battle through the comfort provided by the proximity of their comrades. They were spurred to victory by watching and following the battlefield prowess set by their general or king. The proximity, presence, and observed performance of this leader greatly influenced the behavior of his massed forces.

John Keegan detailed the leadership style of Alexander the Great in his book, The Mask of Command. Describing Alexander as a "heroic leader," Keegan analyzed Alexander's numerous battles. Keegan described Alexander's leadership in 325 B.C. at the battle of Multan, in what is now India:

> He led an immediate assault in person on the outer walls and then led on against the inner citadel in which the Mallians fled. The main Macedonian body straggled after him....Alexander now lost his temper. 'Thinking that the Macedonians who were bringing up ladders were malingering', he seized one himself, set it against the wall, held his shield over his head and started up....Reaching the battlements, he pushed some of the Indians off it with his shield, killed others with his sword and waited for his followers to join him in the foothold he had won.[7]

As the scope of warfare continued to expand with larger forces brought to battle, the influence of the

general or king required augmentation. Ancient leaders used various forms of troop control to direct their forces. Bugle calls and banners rallied and led soldiers. Formations like the phalanx and cohort, that facilitated both command and control and buttressed human frailties, synchronized the movement of combatants into battle.

A general could still influence the actions of his soldiers with his personal battlefield prowess even as late as the American Civil War. Still, the growing magnitude of mass armies in the 19th century required generals to delegate increasingly more responsibility to subordinate leaders.

With the command and control problems created by larger unwieldy mass armies of the Napoleonic era, came another problem. Large armies using traditional methods of close order drill for maneuver suffered increasing casualties due to the growing lethality of battlefield weaponry. These formations provided a target rich environment for evolving weaponry.

During the battle of Gettysburg in 1863, the Confederate soldiers of General Pickett's division, attacking in close formation for control purposes, sustained 67 per cent casualties attempting to breach the Union line.[8] The feeling of security and cohesion derived from surrounding comrades allowed the Confederate attackers the moral fortitude to execute that two thousand yard charge even under devastating fire.

As the charge began to flounder, one of Pickett's brigade commanders, General Lew Armistead, spurred the attackers onward by placing his hat upon the point of his sword and charging forward. Armistead's action rallied Confederate forces to penetrate the Union line although he fell mortally wounded in the process. In

spite of this penetration the Confederate assault failed.[9]

Such tactics continued with little modification through other European wars during the 19th century. Ardant de Picq wrote of this increasing dilemma for commanders:

> The destructive power of improved firearms becomes greater. Battle becomes more open, hindering supervision, passing beyond the vision of the commander and even the subordinate officers.[10]

It was the experience of the Boer War in South Africa at the turn of the 19th century that would for the first time cause a major appraisal of traditional fighting methods.

The Boers, with limited personnel and assets, refused to "play cricket" with opposing British forces. Using smokeless powder and skirmishing techniques, the Boers avoided British observation and fires. At the same time fire from their rapid fire rifles quickly attrited the close order British formations.

A classic example of this Boer tactic occurred during the Battle of Colenso in 1899. During this battle, the British troops conducted thirty minutes of parade ground drill before marching shoulder to shoulder across the open veld against Boer positions. In the ensuing fight the British lost 1,139 casualties and 10 guns. Boer losses totaled 6 dead and 21 wounded.[11] Although the British ultimately subdued the Boers, their battlefield losses for little discernable gain were so devastating that military theorists began to question in earnest the traditional methods of doing battle.

In 1899, Ivan Bloch wrote The Future of Warfare. Bloch analyzed the most recent conflicts and derived an image of the future battlefield and the tremendous capabilities of the weapons. With amazing insight,

Bloch predicted the conditions that would characterize fighting on the Western Front during World War I, fifteen years before that conflict. Bloch wrote:

> At first there will be increased slaughter- increased slaughter on so terrible a scale as to render it impossible to get troops to push the battle to a decisive issue.[12]

Bloch talked of "fire zones" and the devastating effect of modern firepower, along those lines he prophesized:

> Certainly everybody will be entrenched in the next war. It will be a war of great entrenchments. The spade will become as indispensable to the soldier as his rifle. The first thing every man will have to do, if he cares for his life at all, will be to dig a hole in the ground, and throw up as strong an earthen ramp as he can to shield him from the hail of bullets which will fill the air.[13]

Unfortunately, Bloch's predictions did not stimulate a reassessment of traditional tactics. It would take the unprecedented slaughter of mass armies during World War I to sew the seeds of change. The catastrophes of this war would prompt military theorists to seek radical departures from traditional warfighting methods and for the first time these radical views would seriously be considered.

The lethality of the World War I battlefield on the congested Western Front soon reduced that conflict to a stalemate that would last five years. Combatants huddled in opposing trenchlines, facing each other across a "no man's land" which ran without a break from the British channel to the Swiss Alps.

The devastation wrought upon traditional close order formations by this new lethality that Bloch had predicted greatly impacted upon the moral domain of combat. Jim Schneider, in his article "The Emot, Battlefield" explained the rationale for such formations and their critical role as a moral buttress

for combatants:

> It must be remembered that the raison d'etre of tactical formations is to maintain troop control for ourposes of achieving fire direction and superiority against an enemy force. The use of massed formations also imparts a singular moral advantage to all who fight in ranks: moral cohesion is greatly strengthened.[14]

The traditional benefits of close tactical formations were now being offset by overwhelming firepower. The necessary precautions required to protect the force against increasing battlefield lethality brought another predicament to commanders. Of this quandary Schneider stated:

> As units took advantage of the survivability derived from dispersion, the moral cohesion, brought about through the social associations of troops in close physical proximity to one another, was attenuated....At the same time, command and control of the firefight as well as it's intensity was also degraded due to the insuing dispersion.[15]

Troop survivability required protection and dispersal, but moral cohesion to face extreme danger and push the fight to a decision depended on mass formations. Under the conditions of the Western Front, how could an attack survive in sufficient strength to bring victory?

In seeking resolution of this impasse, several prominent theorists began to gain notoriety. Such men as Georg Bruckmueller, Andre Laffarque, J.F.C. Fuller, and B.H. Liddell Hart put forth their ideas in the attempt to restore movement to the battlefield.[16]

Regardless of the solutions put forth by these theorists, the war had shown that traditional means could not attain troop protection and control. Liddell Hart noted the different solutions pursued by protagonists during World War I in his book The Future of Infantry. According to Liddell Hart:

> There were two possible means of reviving movement on the battlefield. One was to make men bullet

> proof by putting them in armored vehicles. The other was to teach men to evade bullets by a revival of stalking methods. The British were pioneers of the first, the Germans of the second method.[17]

Liddell Hart insights were greatly influenced by his personal experience. Consider how Liddell Hart began his career as a military theorist. Serving as a lowly subaltern in the 9th battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Liddell Hart participated in the first battle of the Somme in 1915.

Over fifty one years had passed since Pickett's charge and battlefield lethality had increased exponentially. In spite of this, British troops went over the top in the Somme offensive using almost the same close order tactics employed during the American Civil War.

Liddell Hart suffered three wounds during this battle and then was again injured during a gas attack as his company withdrew from the front. Within minutes of the Yorkshire regiment commitment, the chain of command was felled in a hail of gunfire while leading the troops forward. In fact, Liddell Hart was one of only two officers within his battalion to survive the first day of fighting. A sister battalion lost all officers.

Liddell Hart, being the least wounded of the surviving officers, assumed temporary command of the battalion. On this opening day of the Somme offensive, the British Army sustained no fewer than 60,000 casualties; a powerful indication of the terrible lethality of that particular battlefield.[18]

THE LEGACY OF LIDDELL HART

While convalescing from the wounds that would eventually cashier him from the service, Liddell Hart spent the final two years of the war writing tactical

manuals to assist the war effort. He was not entirely sure of the direction which future tactics should lean. Yet, after several years thought he had come to the realization that the World War I tactics of the British Army were wholly inadequate. Given his infantry background, Liddell Hart focused his early tactics writings on the use of infantry. He envisioned infantry trained in stalking skills moving in small groups to avoid enemy detection and targeting. He wrote of the ideal attributes of this specialized infantry:

> His best means of protection lies in his ability to diminish the target which he offers and to hit the target which the enemy offers. The modern infantry soldier must be tria juncta in uno - stalker, athlete, and marksman.[19]

As early as 1919, Liddell Hart published articles in the Royal United Service Institution Journal describing the type of soldier and leader required to employ these stalking tactics:

> Instead of unity of movement, we require unity of purpose. Each individual moves and acts independently, using the ground to the best advantage, but combining with his fellows to attain a common objective. In the past, this mental discipline was the providence of the principle subordinate commanders alone. Now it is shared by everyman.[20]

Liddell Hart stressed that such decentralized tactics required intelligent soldiers and the highest quality officers as leaders.[21] In subsequent articles, Liddell Hart put forth the "expanding torrent" method of attack. This method advocated probing an enemy position, finding a weakness, and then exploiting that weakness with all available assets.

Liddell Hart's membership on the War Office Committee greatly influenced his most expansive work on infantry, The Future of Infantry, published in 1933. Through his work on this committee examining the

lessons of the Great War, Liddell Hart had access to Allied and German records. The German documents were especially useful because they detailed the German success of "soft spot" infiltration tactics.[22]

In The Future of Infantry, Liddell Hart reiterated his "expanding torrent" method and set forth three types of attack. He described these three attacks as the stalking attack, the masked attack, and the baited attack. Each of these attacks required stealth, deception, and the use of decentralized infiltration for execution.[23]

Liddell Hart's evolving views on small unit infantry tactics made some initial headway in his native England. He was responsible for much of his army's 1921 Infantry Manual. Unfortunately, subsequent versions of this manual significantly diluted his theories.[24] As a matter of special note, while Liddell Hart's infantry views were being rejected at home they were being appreciated elsewhere.

By 1935, the German Army had ordered 5000 copies of The Future of Infantry in translation.[25] Subsequent fighting in World War II indicates that perhaps German interest in Liddell Hart's work may have been of benefit. Trevor Dupuy, writing in A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945, estimated that the German Army in World War II was 20-30% more effective than the British and American Armies.[26]

Interest in Liddell Hart's infantry tactics resurrected again in the early 1980s. Within the U.S. Army General Edward C. Meyer stopped a 50 year trend toward heavier forces and Gen. John A. Wickham Jr. reversed the trend.[27] The Army leadership realized that a force structure containing only heavy forces could not respond to the variety of threats presented by the full spectrum of conflict.

Light divisions were developed to meet a perceived need for highly trained, rapidly deployable forces. These light infantry divisions would play a significant role in low intensity conflict as well as supporting roles in mid-intensity and high-intensity conflict.

Liddell Hart's writings on infantry heavily influenced the U.S. Army doctrine for these new light forces. Current light infantry doctrinal manuals are imbued with his infantry philosophy. Consider the following excerpts from the light infantry company manual, FM 7-71:

> Maneuver. Light infantry....uses dispersion, camouflage, and stealth to close with an unsuspecting enemy.
>
> Leadership. This quality is the critical emphasis of combat power. Dispersed operations under severe terrain and weather conditions require the use of mission type orders; decentralized command and control; and team, squad, and platoon leaders, and company commanders who are capable of independent operations. Junior leaders must be tacticians who exercise initiative and daring in pursuit of the commander's intent.
>
> Teamwork. Small unit training and high quality leadership make for cohesive teams that are able to fight well and keep fighting in spite of the confusion and isolation of battle.[28]

Even some of Liddell Hart's various methods of attack are retained in the U.S. Army light infantry manuals. Such terms as expanding torrent attack and baited attack are provided as techniques in the manuals.[29]

It is clear why the U.S. Army borrowed so heavily from Liddell Hart in developing light infantry doctrine. Outside of the purview of a few small special purpose units, the U.S. Army had little "in house" practical experience in light infantry tactics.

Even during the Vietnam War, where numerous infantry forces were employed, U.S. Army tactical

doctrine was firepower/attrition oriented. U.S. forces anchored themselves to static fire bases and remained for the most part, bound by both roads as well as a considerable logistics tail, and focused on linear battle. Even the advantage air mobility brought the curse of over supervision and centralization, robbing subordinate leaders of initiative.[30] Soldiers and units exposed to light tactics while fighting in southeast Asia were afterward retrained and reoriented to fight mechanized war in western Europe. Having retained little institutional knowledge of such tactics, the U.S. Army logically based their evolving light force doctrine on the theoretical works of someone who had previously written extensively on the subject; that author being Liddell Hart.

The writings of Liddell Hart and our own current light doctrine emphasize the importance of small unit leaders to the light tactical concept. Light infantry tactics cannot be executed without small unit leaders with initiative and daring. These leaders must be capable of independent action and be highly competent in fieldcraft and fighting skills.

What steps can be taken to facilitate the training of future small unit leaders and develop the desirable qualities required to implement these light infantry tactics effectively? A reasonable start point would be to find a role model upon which to fashion our current light infantry small unit leader. Careful analysis of this "role model" would provide valuable insight on how to develop future leaders of similar quality. This role model would be a yard stick, so to speak, to measure the success and growth of our current leaders.

The U.S. Army has many good role models and no doubt has some with light infantry experience as small unit leaders. Still, analysis would be best

facilitated by selecting a role model with prolonged experience as a small unit light infantry leader. Furthermore, detailed documentation of such a role model's experience would greatly assist analysis. Unfortunately, within the U.S. Army, speedy promotion for battlefield success, short tour lengths in combat, and a "line" rather than light infantry tradition, work at cross purposes for finding such a role model. We must look elsewhere besides the U.S. Army for this role model.

There is one leader who stands out when searching for such a role model. This particular role model fought in combat five straight years at the small unit level during World War I. He spent four of those years as a lieutenant. He was wounded on numerous occasions and in one single battle, captured 9000 enemy soldiers, 150 enemy officers, and 81 guns. He received for his achievements over this five year period his nation's version of both the Silver Star and the Medal of Honor (the "Iron Cross" 1st class and the "Pour le Merite") .[31] He fought initially on the Western Front before that theater became stagnant, and then spent the rest of the war fighting in the mountains of Rumania and Italy. The environment he fought in was decentralized and nonlinear.[32] This role model used tactics we would now classify as light. Erwin Rommel is his name.

Liddell Hart's theoretical writings on infantry, which have so greatly influenced U.S. Army light infantry doctrine, closely parallel Rommel's World War I battlefield exploits. Charles Douglas-Home, biographer of Rommel, wrote of this similarity:

> ...even in 1917, Rommel's tactical techniques showed themselves to be the natural and inspired precursors of the Blitzkrieg principles which were later codified by Captain B.H. Liddell Hart in England....Rommel's tactics relied basically on deep penetrations behind enemy lines, and

> unhesitating decisions to attack in the rear. He always assumed that the rear areas would capitulate to a surprise offensive. When he assaulted a position, he immediately set about securing the flanks of his narrow bridgehead and then pushing as many forces as possible on through the gap which he had created and secured, so that they broke out and expanded on the other side-tactics which years later, Liddell Hart was to describe as the expanding torrent.[33]

Much has been written on Rommel. His experiences in battle have been the subject of many books. Unfortunately, history records little of Rommel's training experience. Most books on Rommel focus on his exploits as a division and corps commander, still some records exist on his small unit leader exploits from World War I. Of particular interest to this study is the book, Attacks, which is Rommel's autobiography on the actions he fought in World War I. Clearly, Rommel is an appropriate subject for analysis.

PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT

In order to assess Rommel's small unit leadership, a frame of reference is required. The U.S. Army's field manual on military leadership, FM 22-100, provides such a tool in the "leadership competencies". The leadership competencies are used to evaluate junior leader attributes in the various NCO and officer professional development courses of the U.S. Army. According to FM 22-100:

> The nine leadership competencies provide a framework for leadership development and assessment. They establish broad categories of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that define leader behavior. They are areas where leaders must be competent.[34]

Those nine competencies are:

communications
professional ethics
soldier team development
technical / tactical proficiency
planning
supervision
teaching and counseling
decision making
use of available systems

Eight of these nine competencies are pertinent to an assessment of Rommel's small unit leadership. The ninth competency, use of available systems, concerns the use of computers and analytical techniques.[35] Obviously it is impractical to retrofit this competency onto Rommel's World War I experience. Furthermore, this competency would have little to do with the battle field prowess of a modern small unit light leader; therefore, this competency will be discounted from our analysis.

The three leader competencies of planning, supervision, and technical/tactical proficiency can be grouped and addressed together for our purposes. We are analyzing Rommel's planning and supervision only in a tactical environment. By incorporating both the planning and supervision competencies with technical and tactical training, we fall in line with the existing U.S. Army's hierarchy of leader tasks as specified by the Soldier's Manuals and the Military Qualification Skills (MOS) Manuals. This facilitates discussing planning, supervision, and technical and tactical training all in the same terms as leader's tasks.

Using these leadership competencies as a framework, Rommel's small unit actions will be analyzed and categorized. Analysis will attempt to glean an insight into the type of training that will develop these traits in our own light leaders.

COMMUNICATIONS

Rommel fought on a battlefield without wireless radio. Messengers, visual signals, or telephone wire provided communication over distance. Rommel preferred to communicate face to face whenever possible and thus was often his own messenger. He would often ride or march a considerable distance over rough terrain without sleep to provide face to face reports to higher headquarters.[36] Always, he would attempt to brief personally subordinates from a position overlooking the area of operations to relay his intent better. This procedure greatly reduced misinterpretations and is worthy of emphasis in today's training of light leaders. He habitually accompanied any reconnaissance of enemy positions thereby cutting out any disparities caused by receiving information second hand.[37]

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

One of Rommel's strongest leader attributes was his selfless devotion to mission accomplishment and his men. Whatever the situation, Rommel either shared the burden with his men or shouldered more of it than anyone else. He never put his men in a dangerous situation that he himself was not willing to face. Whether he was clearing French bunkers with a pistol on the Western Front or taking six volunteers on a night swim of the Piave River to encircle Italian forces, he always led from the front.[38] Ideally our training at Ranger School would imbue such dedication.

He repeatedly endured terrific hardship yet would refuse to surrender his post. Terrible stomach ailments continually plagued Rommel on the Western Front but he remained with the fighting.[39] Against the Rumanians he was shot in the arm yet remained in command.[40]

In his effort to give of himself completely on the battlefield he would go days without sleep. He would fall off his horse repeatedly or as after the eleven day Battle of Mount Cosna, babble orders to his soldiers incoherently.[41] In such instances Rommel's subordinates would finally put him to bed.

SOLDIER TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Rommel was a great team builder and was adept at building the unit spirit, discipline, and cohesion that is so necessary to battlefield survival. Rommel's greatest contribution to soldier/team development was the selfless example he set for subordinates and comrades. Regarding Rommel, a former comrade wrote "where Rommel is, the front is."[42]

On the Western Front Rommel made a practice of assisting with the arduous task of constructing trenchworks, fully understanding the positive aspect this would have upon team building within his unit.[43] Conversely, Rommel did not try to win the friendship of subordinates and was a stern task master when he felt it was in the best interests of his subordinates. One of Rommel's oft repeated quotes was "Sweat saves blood!"[44] and he would not hesitate to push his men to the limits of fatigue to provide them a measure of safety on the battlefield.

The actions of Rommel's subordinates during fighting in the Carpathian Mountains shows the strong cohesion Rommel built in his unit. In one of those engagements a wounded NCO was carried throughout the night in a shelter half over eight miles and 1100 feet elevation to receive medical treatment for his severe wounds.[45] Similar battlefield fidelity must be developed within our light units.

One of the greatest testimonies of Rommel's capacity to develop the soldier team was his handling

of "red" naval ratings following the conclusion of the war. These naval ratings were sailors being outprocessed from active duty. These draftees were heavily influenced by communist propaganda and anti-war sentiment, and appeared to be an impossible leadership challenge. Rommel's mission was to shape these openly defiant men into soldiers. Rommel radically modified the behavior of these men within just a few weeks. Their attitude had improved to the degree that the police chief of Stuttgart requested to recruit some of Rommel's troops as policemen to rebuild the police force.[46]

PLANNING, SUPERVISION, and TECHNICAL/TACTICAL PROFICIENCY

In this section we will examine Rommel's skill in the areas of planning and supervision. Additionally, we will analyze Rommel's expertise in other essential tactical proficiencies that are essential to leading light infantry forces. Those proficiencies include:

emplacement of crew served weapons
reconnaissance
obstacle breaching
evacuation of casualties

Rommel excelled at planning. Whenever possible, he would go forward himself for reconnaissance to see the objective himself and visualize better the actions he would have to undertake. This facilitated the rapid formation and transmittal of orders to subordinates. Rommel realized the importance of synchronizing supporting fires with maneuver. He spent considerable effort in planning this synchronization and even went as far as to develop a primitive execution matrix to control and shift fires along prominent terrain features during the fighting on Mount Cosna.[47]

Rommel took every opportunity to supervise the actions of his unit. Essentially, Rommel did his

upmost to place himself at the critical juncture at the appropriate time. In one instance Rommel might discern that critical juncture to be overseeing the care of casualties, on another occasion it might be moving closely behind sappers to direct the breaching of enemy wire.[48]

The positioning of direct fire weapons was probably the leader task Rommel was most skilled at. Rommel proved a master at assessing the terrain to select positions for machine guns and then orchestrating their fires. General DePuy, writing in 1980, addressed the brilliant nature of Rommel's machine gun employment during five critical battles in 1917:

> His tactics were distinguished by the masterful use of direct-fire weapons to gain nearly total fire superiority over his opponents in narrow sectors in order to effect a breakthrough as a prelude to penetration and victory.[49]

Rommel also closely supervised maintenance of equipment. History records only one maintenance problem for Rommel during the entire war.[50]

Rommel's planning skill and adept positioning of machineguns was usually not just the product of an instantaneous terrain assessment, but more usually the result of a long and detailed reconnaissance. Prior to the raid on Pinetree Knob in 1914, Rommel personally reconnoitered enemy fortifications over a several day period. Often he would get so close to the objective that he would have to crawl on his belly within hand grenade range of sentries.[51]

His method for gathering information on the enemy and then rapidly exploiting it would today be characterized as "recon-pull" tactics.[52] Rommel first sent out reconnaissance to pinpoint the enemy, then he rapidly followed up with an attack. In these

situations while consolidating after the attack, he would again push out reconnaissance to maintain contact with the fleeing enemy. He used these tactics in 1917 against both the Rumanians and Italians during the battles of Kurpenvul Valarii, Magura Odobesti, Leinze Peak, and Mount Cragonza. Rommel's strong emphasis on reconnaissance allowed him to frequently act inside his opponents decision cycle. By seizing the initiative from the enemy in this manner, he set terms of combat favorably for his force and often placed the enemy in a dilemma.[53]

Conversely, Rommel took all available actions to secure his force against enemy reconnaissance or offensive action. Whenever his force came to a halt, he would direct a 360 degree defense. This so called "Hedge Hog" defense also consisted of pushing out observation posts (OPs) along likely avenues of approach to provide early warning of an enemy advance.[54]

Rommel displayed considerable skill breaching enemy defenses and obstacle belts. Generally, he preferred to breach obstacles in a stealthful manner without flagging his intentions to the enemy. A common technique he used consisted of clearing a very narrow path through the enemy obstacle belt right up to, but not including, the innermost portion of the obstacle. By doing this, the breach remained camouflaged from enemy detection.

The technical aspects of making a path through the enemy's obstacles was only part of his success in breaching. Rommel would also emplace overwhelming supporting fires to cover the area of intended penetration.[55]

Evacuation of casualties was another frequent responsibility for Rommel. Rommel recognized the value

of timely medical assistance and evacuation, as well as the detrimental effect upon soldiers caused by watching wounded comrades suffer. Rommel's astute supervision of the casualty evacuation after the battle of Bleid has previously been noted. Only several days after that action, Rommel led a small patrol in the Doulcan woods and encountered the untended wounded of a sister regiment. Trying to treat and evacuate these casualties under the dire circumstances generated by rough terrain and limited resources made a lasting impression upon Rommel.[36]

Rommel's demonstrated proficiency in both planning and supervision, as well as emplacement of crew served weapons, reconnaissance, obstacle breaching, and casualty evacuation were critical to his ability to conduct light infantry operations. The current generation of small unit leaders for light infantry units require training that will develop these same skills.

TEACHING AND COUNSELING

Rommel was greatly concerned with the professional development of subordinates. During inactive periods on the Western Front, Rommel spent considerable time training officer candidates.[37] Rommel used every opportunity to train and develop subordinates. When his battalion was placed in a reserve status, out of action, Rommel spent those several weeks running a training school for all companies.

The greatest testimony to Rommel's teaching and counseling abilities was his World War I autobiography, Attacks. This book was simply a published series of Rommel's lectures on small unit tactics that he gave to young officers at the infantry school after the war.[38] These lectures were a collection of his battlefield experiences complete with an "observations" section

after the end of each chapter reiterating the implications and salient points of each action.

Such teaching and counseling by leaders are required to preserve the continuity of excellence in any military organization. Imbedding this responsibility in our light leaders is of primary importance and training courses for our leaders like Ranger School should reflect this.

DECISION MAKING

Decision making was definitely Rommel's strong suit. Rommel constantly sought to wrest the initiative from opponents by acting first and forcing the enemy to react. Rommel did this at the Battle of Defuy Woods in 1914, when he unhinged an enemy counter attack with only sixteen riflemen by directing their fire upon a unsuspecting body of French reserves.

Later in the same fight Rommel saw an opportunity to employ the battalion's machinegun company against an alluring French target. When the machine company commander, (one of Rommel's peers) refused Rommel's suggestion on employment, Rommel took command of the machineguns himself and used them to good effect.[39]

Rommel was well aware of Clausewitz's concept of the "concentric effect of victory". Rommel maintained a close appraisal of the morale of his opponent and understood that a rapid tempo of attack would have a detrimental effect on enemy forces. If the enemy withdrew, Rommel pursued immediately, intermingling with the retreating enemy forces and bypassing surrendering soldiers to capture command elements or key terrain. By staying inside his opponents decision cycle in this manner he could continually force the enemy to react to him vice act against him. Our Ranger School should provide training which similarly hones students' decision making skills.

Rommel's victory against the Italians at Mrzli Peak demonstrated his ability to decide and react faster than his opponents. In this instance, Rommel bypassed front line forces and severed communications between various Italian units. Sensing a wavering in his opponent's will, Rommel walked forward displaying a white handkerchief. Presented with such an audacious display and unsure of the true situation, 1500 fully armed Italians surrendered to Rommel's small detachment.[60]

MODERN LIGHT INFANTRY TRAINING

What has changed on the battlefield since Rommel's World War I experience? The U.S. Army uses the Joint Readiness Training Center to provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the light infantry forces fighting in an environment of modern combat.[61] A considerable amount of the leadership for light units rotating through JRTC are ranger qualified. Thus linkage between training strengths and weaknesses noted at JRTC and the quality of leaders produced by the Ranger School can be drawn.

The threat that modern light infantry units must deal with is more sophisticated and diverse than the one Rommel faced. Since Rommel's World War I experience armored vehicles have proliferated the battlefield, even among less modern third world nations. This necessitates frequent training for light infantry in anti-armor tactics.

Indirect fire has become more responsive, lethal, and accurate. Chemical munitions are more deadly. Night observation devices and various sensors allow better detection of the enemy during limited visibility. Yet, these technological improvements are

still greatly offset by small unit infiltrations and nonlinear tactics.

The machinegun still retains primacy on the battlefield at the small unit level of fighting and should be trained on accordingly. For light forces using decentralized movement on a modern nonlinear battlefield, contact with the enemy can come at any time, thus battle drills are of increasing importance.

A significant change to the battlefield comes from the air threat. The U.S. Army reflects an understanding of the impact of aviation and its integration with ground maneuver by naming its doctrine "AirLand battle". Because of limited protection and firepower, light forces can most effectively counter this air threat by the use of camouflage and other passive means. Simple passive measures can often offset the modern air threat.

Training observations at JRTC have surfaced problems which indicate weaknesses in several of the leadership competencies. Problems exist in planning, and in several of the technical and tactical proficiencies, specifically employment of crew served weapons, fire control, and active/passive air defense.

Looking at the competency of planning, two thirds of light units have difficulty preparing and issuing orders. Platoon leaders often forget to use METT-T analysis or simply restate the higher unit's plans without adapting them to their situation.[62]

In regards to tactical proficiency, training observations indicate that small unit leaders are weak in the emplacement of crew served weapons. This is reflected by the fact that eighty percent of units experience problems with chance contact. The specified cause of this problem is that platoon leaders do not rapidly assess the situation and then fail to take

coordinated action with organic fires (primarily the machine gun) to suppress and fix the enemy.

Further indication of this weakness is the observation that for actions on the objective visual fire control measures are seldom planned in sufficient detail.[63] This illustrates a lack of understanding on proper emplacement and control of crew served weapons.

This weakness extends to the anti-armor realm as well. In one third of the light rotations at JRTC, company commanders did not position anti-armor systems correctly to insure adequate standoff and survivability.[64]

Light units at JRTC display uniformly weak reactions to enemy air attack. This runs the entire spectrum from passive air defense, to displacing after attack, and small arms air defense.[65] Infiltration through enemy lines is a frequent employment of light infantry. An opponent likely would have at least air parity over the area covered by his own ground defenses. Therefore, the likelihood of light forces encountering an air threat on the modern battlefield is considerable.

ASSESSMENT OF THE RANGER SCHOOL

Having built a profile of Rommel's leadership skills using the framework of the leadership competencies and updated those skills to contemporary warfare through the lens of JRTC, an assessment of the Ranger School POI is now possible.[66] It now would be instructive to look at Ranger School and see how these leadership competencies are being developed in students.

COMMUNICATIONS

The light leader, operating in the environment of a decentralized nonlinear battlefield, will be unable to stand over his subordinates to monitor their activities. He must package and receive guidance adroitly as Rommel did. The Ranger curriculum fully supports the development of this capability.

Students spend hours learning to package their thoughts, guidance, and intent in a succinct manner through the preparation and receipt of operation and fragmentary orders. All guidance given to students, and passed through the student chain of command is presented in the format of a five paragraph order. For eight weeks and two days, Ranger students use this methodology to communicate. Graduates are able to present information quickly and accurately through this constant repetition and practice.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The decentralized tactics required to execute light operations heavily depend on strong professional ethics of the leaders.[67] Absolute trust is required for disparate elements moving on different routes toward a common objective.

Small teams of soldiers infiltrating on the battlefield must trust and rely solely on their immediate squad leader. No higher leader will be present to confirm or deny the correctness of the actions undertaken. There are no checks and balances. T.R.Fehrenbach, noted historian of the Korean War, wrote of the modern conditions of warfare:

> Ground battle is a series of platoon actions. No longer can a field commander stand on a hill like Lee or Grant, and oversee his formations. Orders in combat, the orders that save men or get them killed, are not given by generals, or even majors, they are given by lieutenants and sergeants, and sometimes PFC's.

> When a sergeant gives a soldier an order in battle, it must have the same weight as that of a four star general.[68]

Likewise leaders of the various elements must trust each other and have confidence in each other's abilities. On the decentralized battlefield the fight will often commence without certainty of support from adjacent units. Such infiltrating elements might be out of visual and radio range or incapable of communication. Forces must "swarm, fight, and disperse" to be protected from devastating lethality of enemy countermeasures.[69] In such situations, only through mutual trust can small units in isolation expect to conduct vigorous independent action to support their portion of the overall attack.

The Ranger School has several outstanding techniques for instilling and evaluating these necessary professional ethics in perspective leaders. The techniques used are the Ranger Creed and peer ratings.

The Ranger Creed provides an outstanding ethical foundation for students. The creed is the primary mechanism for instilling students with ethical values. The creed consists of six verses extolling critical soldierly virtues. Students are required to memorize the creed, and the creed is recited in unison at virtually every formation. Such phrases as "I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy" and "Surrender is not a Ranger word" are indicative of the creed's powerful message.[70]

The course devotes a total of seven and a half hours of curriculum to peer ratings. The ratings take place after each of the four major phases. These peer ratings occur within student squads. In this manner, each student is evaluated by those who have been a constant witness to his behavior. An adverse peer

rating can be a cause for recycling a student through a particular phase and several can result in dropping a student from the course.

Rommel could have never undertaken his daring exploits without the full trust and respect of the men who followed him. Peer ratings let Ranger students know if their behavior is eliciting that kind of trust and confidence from comrades.

SOLDIER TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The Ranger School curriculum excels at the necessary soldier team development required to conduct decentralized light operations. Seventy-nine hours of confidence related training build this small unit cohesion, pride, and trust initially.

Although some of this training is directed towards individual confidence, a large portion of the confidence training is small unit and buddy team oriented. Obstacle courses are negotiated in squad groupings. In mountaineering, squads construct rope bridges and conduct casualty/litter rappells. During multiechelon training, the soldier team is further developed as squads work closely together conducting small boating operations and crossing water obstacles. This mutually shared hardship and in some instances, danger, builds a strong spirit of small unit cohesion. This kind of small unit cohesion allowed Rommel and six of his men to swim the Piave river at night and encircle and capture a vastly superior Italian force. According to S.L.A. Marshall:

> Man is a gregarious animal. He wants company. In his hour of greatest danger his herd instinct drives him toward his fellows. It is a source of comfort to him to be close to another man....Since this is his natural urge, what restrains him and enables him finally to retain his position in the formation which is needed for successful maneuver?
>
> Primarily, it is his training, his intelligence, and his habit working against his instinct.[71]

Ranger school currently provides this training and habit, as well as faith in comrades.

PLANNING, SUPERVISION, and TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL TRAINING

The nonlinear environment that Rommel fought in required him to have a sound background in certain critical leader tasks. Collective mission accomplishment depended on Rommel's execution of these leader tasks on a continual basis and under adverse conditions.

Considering that Ranger School is first and foremost a leadership school, a logical expectation would be that a good portion of the training and testing focus would be on these critical leader tasks. Yet, during the almost 600 hours of multiechelon training currently in the Ranger curriculum, each student is provided only five or six leadership evaluation opportunities where he can exercise these leader tasks.

To support these evaluation opportunities, student missions are broken down in to various phases and the student chain of command is rotated accordingly.. Also, when conducting multiechelon training at platoon level, perhaps only five leadership positions can be evaluated at any given time out of a 35-45 student platoon.

Of these leadership opportunities, some might be of immense value to the student, like the actions on the objective portion of a raid, or the planning of an ambush. Other phases of a mission, although important to student learning, can be of less value to leadership evaluation, like control of a movement phase or organizing a patrol base.

Looking first at planning, the Ranger School's emphasis on this topic is adequate. During fundamentals of patrolling 12 hours are devoted to

instruction and practical exercise on both planning and mission preparation. Every mission during multiechelon training requires students to conduct detailed planning as well, so constant exercise of student planning skills occur. Still, the individual planning skills (i.e. the writing of various type orders) of each student need to be validated.

The Ranger School also puts a strong training emphasis on supervision. Students are given hours of instruction on the duties of the squad leader and platoon sergeant. During multiechelon training student leaders are closely evaluated on their detailed supervision of subordinates.

Again, supervisory skills of students are not validated before multiechelon training. Inspections religiously occur and students receive some instruction on inspection, particularly on waterproofing of equipment. Yet, problems with equipment shortages and equipment serviceability caused by frequent usage hamper the detail of student inspections. Too many basic items of issue that come with machine guns, night vision devices, and radios are missing. Under these circumstances it is exceedingly difficult for students to use technical manuals to inspect in the manner that will be expected of them in units following graduation.

In order for the Ranger School to develop students with a framework to build toward Rommel's skills; frequent training and validation of key leader tasks by all students is required throughout the Ranger Course. Training of such a nature would allow students to build and sustain their skills in certain critical leader tasks through repeated exposures with an aim toward approaching the "band of excellence" as touted in FM 25-100.

This is not to say that multiechelon training is not required in Ranger School. There is a clear necessity for multiechelon training in the curriculum. Multiechelon training gives the student an appreciation for the common soldier's hardship by placing the student in numerous low ranking duty positions. Additionally, the conduct of multiechelon training provides students practical experience with the real complexities of trying to direct and control soldiers who are cold, wet, hungry, and tired.

Additional benefits of this multiechelon training are that it provides a stressful decentralized environment where students are forced to operate with little external assistance. Students also derive a great learning benefit from the detailed after action reviews that follow each multiechelon mission.[72]

Still, in regard to Ranger School, it must be remembered that the student squads, platoons, and companies are transitory in nature and exist only for the duration of the course. The end state of Ranger School is not to build effective squads and platoons, it is to build effective leaders. The training and evaluation focus should first be on leader tasks and then culminate with multiechelon training after prowess with leader tasks is fully demonstrated by students.[73]

Ranger School, as a leadership course, must not let the collective training obscure the focus on leader training. It must be remembered that when a student platoon in Ranger School conducts multiechelon training, forty ranger students carry rifles and machine guns while only one student is evaluated as platoon leader. Although, the student platoon leader may be learning much, the leader training that the other forty students are receiving is not maximized. A

reassessment of the heavy multiechelon training focus within the Ranger Course is probably required considering these economies of scale.

Some validation of leader skills currently exist in the course. For example, there are examinations on land navigation and call for fire. Still, many other leader skills are taught but not tested or validated. Before the Ranger student is required to run, he must first demonstrate that he can crawl and walk.

To assist us in determining which critical leaders tasks support the various light infantry mission and conversely require validation at Ranger School ARTEP 7-8 MTP (Mission Training Plan for the Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad) provides a useful matrix.[74] This matrix lists leader tasks and displays the relationship of collective infantry tasks to those leader tasks.

Of course, the burden of teaching and validating all these leader tasks does not fall entirely within the purview of Ranger School's eight week curriculum. Courses preceding Ranger School, like the basic noncommissioned officers course, officer candidate school, and the various officer basic courses teach some of these leader tasks.

Additionally, units are also responsible for building upon and expanding the knowledge of these tasks. However, if we take this base listing of tasks and then focus on only the leader tasks that Rommel had to frequently employ plus the tasks identified through our observations at JRTC, we can discern the critical leader tasks that need to be taught and validated in Ranger School and tailor them to a manageable level.

Our analysis of Rommel indicated his skills in planning, emplacement and use of crew served weapons, reconnaissance, obstacle breaching, and evacuation of casualties were necessary for mission success. JRTC

training observations complement that analysis and further indicate a requirement for more leader training in passive and active air defense. Based on that aggregate analysis, the below listed matrix indicates appropriate leader tasks for repetitive training and then validation during the Ranger Course. The "x" indicates whether each leader task is trained or tested in the current curriculum.

NECESSARY LEADER TASKS FOR VALIDATION

SUBJECT	LEADER TASKS	SOURCE	TEACH	TEST
TROOP LEADING PROCEDURES AND PLANNING	* issue an oral operations order (raid & ambush)	11B SL III	X	X
	* issue a fragmentary order	11B SL III	X	
	* issue a warning order	11B SL III	X	
	* conduct troop leading procedures	11B SL III	X	
	* conduct an inspection	MOS level I	X	
	* plan use of supporting fires	11B SL IV		
	* plan for the use of control measures	MOS SL II		
EMPLACEMENT OF CREW SERVED WEAPONS	* analyze terrain	com. SL III		
	* select an overwatch position	11B SL II		
	* designate primary, alternate, and supplementary firing positions for key weapons	11B SL IV		
	* select a firing position for the M47 Dragon	11B SL III		
	* control rate and distribution of fire	11B SL II		
	* consolidate and reorganize following	MOS SL II	X	
	* inspect a direct fire range card	MOS SL II		
RECONNAISSANCE	* conduct a leader's reconnaissance	11B SL III	X	
	* establish an observation post	com. SL III	X	
	* supervise use of night vision devices	11B SL II		
OBSTACLE BREACHING	* move over, through, or around obstacles	MOS SL I		
	* neutralize mines	11B SL II		
EVACUATION OF CASUALTIES	* transport a casualty using a one man carry	MOS SL I	X	
	* transport a casualty using a two man carry or a litter	MOS SL I	X	
	* establish a helicopter landing point	11B SL IV	X	
DEFENSE AGAINST AIR THREAT	* direct small arms air defense and passive air defense techniques	MOS SL II	X	
	* inspect unit camouflage	MOS SL I	X	

These leader tasks need to be first demonstrated to students, trained repeatedly, and then finally validated prior to going on to further collective training. Multiechelon training conducted afterward in the course would run much smoother. Arguments that such leader tasks are validated elsewhere, for example

in IOBC, are moot. The ranger students that become the future leadership of light infantry divisions encompass soldiers from all combat and combat support branches and a wide variety of ranks.

TEACHING AND COUNSELING

Ranger students learn about teaching and counseling through the example set for them by the Ranger cadre. Overall counseling is conducted efficiently. Counseling of students by cadre is conducted on a frequent and reoccurring basis.

Counseling of students occurs at the end of each phase of training and whenever a student completes a leadership position. It also occurs when a student does something of significant merit or detriment, like navigating for the patrol with great accuracy or falling asleep while posted as security.

The counseling process is hampered from complete effectiveness by the limited validation of leader tasks in the Ranger curriculum. Over the course of eight weeks, five or six evaluated leader positions do not provide students with sufficient feedback on their leader capabilities.

Considering that evaluated leader positions for students occur on diverse missions, during various phases of operation, and in different portions of the course, validation of leader tasks prior to multiechelon training would provide students a more thorough picture of personal weaknesses and strengths. This would also enhance counseling by focusing it on individual student performance.

Because the Ranger curriculum strives to put students in the environment that closely approximates the physical and mental stress of combat, the receptiveness of the student audience is often hampered for teaching purposes. It should be realized that a Ranger student who has slept only several hours during recent days and who is undergoing rigorous physical

conditioning would have enough trouble trying to stay awake during instruction, let alone retain for any length of time the subject matter being taught.

This is not an argument for softening the Ranger curriculum. Yet, thought must be given to how the physical and mental rigor of the curriculum can be maintained and at the same time students taught effectively. These two environments work at cross purposes to each other and thus should be separated.

DECISION MAKING

To exercise students in decision making, student scenarios need to replicate the uncertainty, fog, and friction that are common place on the battlefield. Student objectives must be protected by realistic obstacles and active counter reconnaissance. Furthermore, light infantry will often have to infiltrate and operate in areas where the enemy would maintain air parity or superiority, so an air threat would be constant.

But does the training environment at the Ranger school fully meet this standard? Most student objectives have no obstacles requiring students to breach or bypass. Student patrols see little counter-reconnaissance play, and an air threat is not portrayed. Currently, the only place in the curriculum where students meet a tough and determined enemy is in the desert phase where students conduct MILES force on force free play situational exercises for a three day period.

Unexpected contact with the enemy on the modern battlefield is a real possibility. Students need to frequently exercise their decision making against such unexpected eventualities. Clausewitz said:

> Peacetime maneuvers are a feeble substitute for the real thing; but even they can give an army an advantage over others whose training is confined to routine mechanical drill. To plan maneuvers so that some element of friction is involved, which

> will train officers judgement, common sense, and resolution is far more worthwhile than inexperienced people might think.[75]

Student training should be increasingly complex in accordance with the "crawl, walk, run" philosophy. During initial leader training and validation, scenarios would necessarily be simple. To accommodate increasing student proficiency follow on multiechelon training would require an active and cunning opponent.

Rommel found himself constantly placed on the horns of a dilemma by the actions of his opponents and through battlefield fog and friction. Only his astute decision making allowed him to overcome these hurdles.

Ranger students must practice reacting to the unexpected. According to MG Wayne A. Downing, a former commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment:

> The set piece or canned scenario is perfectly acceptable at the beginning, but do not let this basic approach carry on into advanced training. Nothing is certain on the battlefield. We must teach our soldiers to adapt to any situation they might find themselves in, even if we have to create the unforeseen in training.[76]

CONCLUSIONS

This research sought to determine if the U.S. Army Ranger School develops the necessary small unit leadership skills to support the mission of the light infantry divisions. To recap, first, the leader competencies were used as criteria to capture the essence of a renown soldier's small unit leadership in a light infantry environment, (that soldier being Rommel). These skills were updated to modern combat based on training observations from JRTC. This aggregate assessment was then measured against the current Ranger School POI.

Our analysis finds the subject matter taught in the current Ranger curriculum insufficient to develop all the necessary small unit skills required for a

light leader. Although the Ranger School POI nurtures student growth towards the light leader ideal in some leader competencies, (communication, professional ethics, and soldier team development) other competencies require more emphasis.

The existing Ranger program only partially cultivates students in a number of leader competencies, falling short of what is required to develop light leaders. The leadership competencies of supervision, teaching and counseling, planning, decision making, and technical/tactical proficiency require more training and particularly validation within the Ranger Course.

The shortfalls in the development of these leadership competencies within the current curriculum can be rectified. For corrective action, necessary modifications to the course could be accomplished with a change to the program of instruction. This would allow existing training assets to be shuffled to support the required changes. Furthermore, modification could be conducted without dismantling the basic construct of the current course which has proved so valuable over the years.

An adjustment of training environment to complement the POI change also would be required. Critical to this adjustment would be deconflicting the necessary physical and mental toughening of students from their training and validation on critical leader tasks.

In order to accomplish this the initial phase of the course would concentrate on the character building aspect of physical and mental stress. Students that do not have the commensurate physical prowess or mental toughness would be culled out during this initial phase. Remaining students would begin a subsequent phase, training on necessary leader tasks followed by validation of those tasks. Providing students sufficient rest and nourishment would be essential to

the student learning process in the training and validation phase.

Having then spent an appropriate amount of time training on and validating these leader tasks, students would then have sufficient confidence to attempt employing these skills as part of collective multiechelon training in subsequent phases of the course. The focus for the remainder of the course would be on honing students' leader skills and applying them in an environment of rigor and challenge which approximates the stress of combat.

To support these POI changes training lanes would need to be developed so critical leader tasks could be trained repeatedly and then validated. The use of terrain which would draw out and reinforce teaching points would be essential to the success of these training lanes.

Expansion of the leader task training and validation segment of the curriculum would require a proportionate reduction in multiechelon training. Multiechelon training remaining would consist of force on force situational exercises. This would allow a free play environment with an aggressive opposing force which would realistically exercise student decision making.

Additionally, some cadre retraining would be required. Established methods of training would not die easy. It would be important that cadre demonstrate competence in evaluated leader tasks prior to instruction. It would be equally important for cadre to display complete knowledge of the conditions and necessary standards to denote successful accomplishment of leader tasks.

IMPLICATIONS

For naval fleets, bomber wings, and armored divisions, the technical capabilities of the various weapon systems within those organizations have a significant impact upon their combat power. Yet, more than any other combat organization, the light infantry division must rely on the positive effects of small unit leadership to build combat power. For the light infantry, battlefield survival and success depends solely on the critical small unit leadership required to employ light tactics.

Taking the existing Ranger School as is, and expecting it to automatically meet the leadership needs of the new light infantry divisions does not provide the full solution. We are, in the words of Mao Tsetung: "cutting the feet to fit the shoes".[77]

Light leaders will fight as they have been trained. If that training has not brought out the commensurate skill, daring, and initiative required to fight decentralized light tactics, we have light infantry divisions in name only, organically weakened with limited firepower and little protection. America's light infantry soldiers deserve the best leadership we can provide to fight, win, and survive. No stone should be left unturned to develop this necessary leadership.

APPENDIX A

RANGER SCHOOL PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

The United States Army Ranger School has been in existence since 1 October 1950. The outbreak of the Korean war was the catalyst for intiating the Ranger training program. The program was developed in response to a perceived need for elite, highly trained infantry along the lines of the World War II Ranger Battalions.[78]

According to the current Ranger School Program of Instruction (POI) dated 1 August 1988, the purpose of the School is:

> ...to provide graduates capable of training units and individuals in ranger skills. To develop leadership skills of selected officer and enlisted personnel by requiring them to perform effectively as small unit leaders in a realistic tactical environment under mental and physical stress approaching that found in combat.[79]

The Ranger Course lasts eight weeks and two days and consists of 1326.1 academic hours. An optimum student class size is 250 personnel but often over 300 students begin a class.[80] The Ranger course is broken down into four separate 14 day phases. The initial phase takes place at Ft. Benning, Georgia and endeavors to prepare students physically and mentally for the strenuous independent small unit tactical operations that follow by developing leader skills with emphasis on knowledge, courage, endurance, and enthusiasm.[81] The three subsequent phases of the Ranger Course are conducted in the varied environments of mountains, jungle/swamp, and desert to expose students to the widely differing conditions that influence ground combat.

Thirty three hours of the course are devoted to student examination. Each student is graded go/no go on a communications test, the combat water survival test, the army physical fitness test, call for fire, terrain navigation, and knot tying. Additionally, there are 579 hours devoted to collective field training.

This collective field training is conducted in a multiechelon fashion.[82] During this multiechelon training each student will be evaluated in four or five leadership positions.

Students receive 112 hours of collective field training without evaluation. This training consists of ungraded instruction in fundamentals of patrolling, platoon battle drills, techniques pertinent to the special training environments airborne and air assault training and a cadre led patrol.

Integral to the Ranger curriculum is confidence building. The Ranger curriculum devotes 79.5 hours to confidence related training. This confidence training consists of a water confidence test, negotiation of two different obstacle courses, hand to hand combat, and basic mountaineering. Commander's time consumes 248.6 hours of the Ranger Program of Instruction and includes activities like maintenance, hygiene, preparation for the field, and a few precious hours of break. Major deployments between training areas occupy 44.5 hours. Administrative bivouvac takes 43.5 hours. The remaining hours of the program of instruction are devoted to student arrivals and departures at training sites, peer evaluations, after action reviews and training summaries.

APPENDIX B

THE RANGER CREED

R Recognizing that I volunteered as a Ranger, fully knowing the hazards of my chosen profession, I will always endeavor to uphold the prestige, honor, and high "esprit de corps" of the Ranger Regiment.

A Acknowledging the fact that a Ranger is a more elite soldier who arrives on the cutting edge of battle by land, sea, and air, I accept the fact that as a Ranger, my country expects me to move farther, faster, and fight harder than any other soldier.

N Never shall I fail my comrades. I will always keep myself mentally alert, physically strong, and morally straight and I will shoulder more than my share of the task, whatever it my be. One hundred percent and then some.

G Gallantly will I show the world that I am a specially selected and well trained soldier. My courtesy to superiors, my neatness of dress, and my care of equipment shall set the example for others to follow.

E Energetically will I meet the enemies of my country. I shall defeat them on the field of battle, for I am better trained and will fight with all my might. Surrender is not a Ranger word. I will never leave a fallen comrade to fall into the hands of the enemy and under no circumstances will I ever embarrass my country.

R Readily will I display the intestinal fortitude required to fight on the Ranger objective and accomplish the mission, though I be the lone survivor.

RANGERS LEAD THE WAY

ENDNOTES

1. FM 100-5: Operations. (1986): pp 11-13. Combat power is defined as the ability to fight. Its effect is created by combining maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership in combat actions against an enemy in war. Leadership is the most essential element of combat power.

2. Wickham, John A. 1984 White Paper, Light Infantry Divisions: p.2.

3. Ibid: p.3.

4. Light Infantry Division TOE Series 17. (1 Oct 89)

5. Zais, Mitchell. 7th LID, G3, phone interview (18 Oct 90).

6. DePuy, William E. "The Light Infantry: Indispensable Element of a Balanced Force." Army. (June 1985): p. 28.

7. Keegan, John. The Mask of Command. (1987): pp. 76-77.

8. Schneider, Jim. "The Empty Battlefield". Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies. (1987): p. 43.

9. Shaara, Michael. The Killer Angels. (1974): pp. 333-336.

10. du Picq, Ardant. Battle Studies. Ancient and Modern. (1903) in Roots of Strategy: pp. 136-137.

11. Dixon, Norman. On the Psychology of Military Incompetence. (1976): p. 59.

12. Bloch, Jean de. The Future of Warfare. (1899): p. xvi.

13. Ibid. p. xxvii.

14. Schneider: p. 42.

15. Ibid: p. 44.

16 English, John: On Infantry. (1981): pp. 15-20 & 32. The German Colonel Bruckmueller designed tactics using short violent artillery preparations to initially paralyze enemy artillery and command and control. Storm troops would then bypass enemy

strongpoints under the cover of close artillery support to move into the enemy's rear areas.

Andre Laffargue was a French officer who wrote a training pamphlet advocating pushing light machine guns, automatic rifles, and mortars forward to best support infiltrating infantry. Little attention was paid to Laffargue's pamphlet by the French military, however the Germans captured a copy of it, had it translated and issued it to their troops.

J. F. C. Fuller was a British officer who envisioned the tank as the weapon of the future. Fuller advocated vast tank armadas sweeping across the battlefield. Fuller saw infantry's sole role as holding strong points and policing up the battlefield.

17. Liddell Hart, B.H. The Future of Infantry. (1936): p. 27.

18. Bond, Brian. Liddell Hart, a Study of his Military Thought. (1976): p. 17.

19. Liddell Hart: p.70-71.

20. Bond, Brian: p. 219.

21. Ibid: p. 219.

22. English, John: pp. 36 & 38.

23. Liddell Hart: pp. 60 & 64-65.

24. English: p. 45.

25. Mearsheimer, John, J. Liddell Hart and the Weight of History. (1988): p. 29.

26. Dupuy, Trevor. A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945. (1977): p. 253. Original methodology derived from William Florence's thesis, "Rommel's Book Infantry Attacks: How to Teach to Fight."

27. DePuy, William, E. "The Light Infantry: Indispensable Element of a Balanced Force", Army (June 1985): p. 26.

28. FM 7-71: Light Infantry Company. (1967): pp. viii-ix.

29. Ibid: pp. 4-42 & 4-49.

30. Van Creveld, Martin. Command in War. (1985): pp. 255-6. "Under the conditions peculiar to the war in Vietnam, major units seldom had more than one

of their subordinate outfits engage the enemy at any one time. Ordinarily this should have permitted each commander to control a larger number of subordinates, thus leading to decentralization and flattening of the hierarchical structure; instead it lead to a very different phenomena. A hapless company commander engaged in a firefight on the ground was subjected to the direct observation by the battalion commander circling above, who was in turn supervised by the brigade commander circling a thousand or so feet higher up, who was in his turn monitored by the division commander in the next highest chopper, who might even be so unlucky as to have his performance watched by the Field Forces (corps) commander. With each of these commanders asking the men on the ground to tune in to his frequency and explain the situation, a heavy demand for information was generated that could and did interfere with the troops ability to operate effectively."

31. Young, Desmond. Rommel the Desert Fox. (1950): pp. 17 & 20-21.

32. Rommel, Erwin. Attacks. (1937): The book jacket review of the 1979 Athena Press version of Attacks describes Rommel's World War I experience: "Unlike most other officers on both sides of the conflict, Rommel did not spend the war in the trenches of France. He was there [in 1914 & 1915 before the front became static], but also participated in the mobile campaigns in Rumania, Austria, and Italy as a company and detachment commander in an elite mountain battalion. Often operating independently and with great initiative he was able to achieve startling battlefield successes."

33. Douglas-Home, Charles. Rommel. (1973): p. 29.

34. FM 22-100: Military Leadership. (1989): p. 66.

35. Ibid: p. 68.

36. Rommel: pp. 7, 139, & 248.

37. Ibid: pp. 142, 161, 176, 189, & 226.

38. Young: p. 21.

39. Rommel: pp. 15, 17, 26, & 45.

40. Ibid: pp. 151-167.

41. Ibid: pp. 47 & 199.

42. Young: p. 23.

43. Rommel: p. 82.

44. Ibid: p. 176.

45. Ibid: p. 145.

46 Young: pp. 28-29.

47. Rommel: pp. 114, 116, 128, 141, 142, 144, 146, & 168. Rommel also favored two pronged attacks. This allowed him flexibility to shift his main effort and facilitated the deceptive use of feints that he planned frequently with great effect.

48. Ibid: pp. 12 & 94.

49. DePuy, William E. "Re-examining an Old Law, One-Up and Two-Back?" Army, (January 1980): p. 21.

50. Rommel: pp. 123 & 132. While fighting in the severe cold weather around the town of Gagesti. Rommel's machine guns could not function at the critical moment due to freezing conditions. After being warmed with alcohol burners, the weapons eventually thawed and then went into action. On subsequent missions during the winter the machine guns were wrapped in blankets to prevent such a recurrence. Because of Rommel's maintenance scrutiny his machine guns never again failed him.

51. Ibid: p. 92.

52. Lind, William, S. Maneuver Warfare, (1985): p. 18. Lind defines recon-pull tactics as: "the axis of advance is determined by the results of reconnaissance rather than being fixed by command from above, and it shifts in response to what the recon finds." This is contravention of traditional reconnaissance use which is refered to as "command push". When using "command push" tactics the axis of advance of a unit is chosen before the operation begins.

53. Ibid: pp. 108, 118, 158, 213, 223, & 253. As a further refinement of this tactic, Rommel gave his reconnaissance elements telephone wire. This wire provided him instant communication with reconnaissance and also served as an outstanding guide for the main body to quickly follow. He used telephone wire in this manner during the battles of Mount Cosna and Mount Kolovrat.

54. Ibid: p. 107.

55. Ibid: pp. 66 & 189-190. Often Rommel would conduct a feint to divert enemy attention elsewhere, while several of his men quickly cut through the last few strands of barb wire in the prepared lane. With the breach of the obstacle now complete, supporting fires would commence isolating the breach. This would be followed by a small party of Rommel's men rushing along the cleared path to hold the shoulders of the penetration against counter attack. Seconds later, Rommel would lead the remainder of his force through the breach at a dead run exploiting deep into the enemy rear and bypassing adjacent enemy positions that were being suppressed. Rommel breached obstacles in this manner during his attack against the "central" position held by the French in 1915 and also against the Italians at Mt. Cosna in 1917.

56. Ibid: pp. 23 & 59-60. Rommel knew well the discomfort and fear of the wounded, having endured this experience personally. While fighting in Bouzon woods against the French in 1914, Rommel received a bullet wound in the leg. After languishing in "no man's land", he endured the agony of being carried off the battlefield in a shelter half. This part of his journey was followed by a painful trip to the field hospital in a horse drawn ambulance traveling along a shell torn road.

57. Ibid: p. 72.

58. Young: p. 33.

59. Rommel: pp. 33-39.

60. Ibid: p. 268.

61. All U.S. Army's light units conduct training rotations through JRTC. At this training center, light forces are given an external evaluation while exercising against an opposing force using threat doctrine and state of the art weaponry.

62. Crawford, Howard, W. & Hensler, Robert, M. Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Training Observations. Implications for Senior Leadership. (April 1990): p.85.

63. Ibid: pp. 20 & 23.

64. Ibid: p. 28.

65. Ibid: p. 61.

66. A more detailed discussion of the Ranger School POI is provided at Appendix A.

67. FM 22-100, Military Leadership, (June 1989): p. 29. There are four elements of the professional Army ethic. They are loyalty, duty, selfless service, and integrity.

68. Fehrenbach, T.R. This Kind of War. (1963): p. 433.

69. Izzo, Robert and Schneider, James. "Clausewitz Elusive Center of Gravity". Parameters (Sept 1987). p. 57.

70. The Ranger Creed is detailed in Appendix B.

71. Marshall, Samuel L. Men Against Fire. (1978): p. 141-142.

72. FM 25-100: p.1-4. "Multiechelon training is the most efficient way of training and sustaining a diverse number of mission essential tasks within limited periods of training time."

73. Ibid: p. 4-4. FM 25-100 provides this warning on leader training: "Leaders spend virtually all available training time supervising the training of subordinates; often they do not increase their own understanding of how to fight."

74. ARTEP 7-8 MTP (Mission Training Plan for the Rifle Platoon and Squad). (June 1988): pp. 2-12 thru 2-43. This manual indicates that over 400 individual soldiers tasks are required to support the 48 small unit infantry collective tasks. Just over 200 of these listed tasks are leader tasks. These 200 plus tasks are designated for NCO's and officers and are indicated as such by skill level: military qualification skill (MOS) I and II tasks or soldier's manual tasks of skill level 2,3, or 4.

75. Von Clausewitz, Carl. On War. (1832): p. 122.

76. Downing, Wayne, A. "Training to Fight." Military Review. (May 1986): p. 22.

77. Mao Tsetung. Selected Writings of Mao Tsetung. (1972): p. 78.

78. FM 7-95, Ranger Unit Operations, (June 1987): pp. F5-F9 Initially the course trained collective units but by 22 October 1951 the focus had changed to individual training.

79. Program of Instruction for the Ranger Course. (1988): p. 1A01.

80. FM 7-85: p. F10. Upon graduation the majority of ranger students return to service in light infantry divisions or the three battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment. According to the 1973 mandate of General Creighton Abrams (then Army Chief of Staff), the Ranger Battalions are elite light infantry.

81. Program of Instruction for the Ranger Course: p. 4A01.

82. Multiechelon means training is occurring more than one echelon within the unit. The collective unit, subordinate units, leaders, individual soldiers, and crews simultaneously receive training.

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